

2020 SAMHSA SOAR December e-News

Now Available for Download: 2020 National SAMHSA SOAR Outcomes Issue Brief

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is thrilled to release the *2020 National SOAR Outcomes* issue brief to the SOAR community! The issue brief provides a look at SOAR implementation across the nation and expands on the 2020 SOAR Outcomes infographic released in the November 2020 SAMHSA SOAR eNews (view the [full infographic](#) and the [text alternative](#)).

This past year has been a challenging one, but our SOAR community is resilient! Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, the results from this year's outcomes collection are genuinely remarkable. In the FY2020 reporting period, there were 4,265 approvals on SOAR-assisted initial Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications, with decisions received in an average of 115 days and an allowance rate of 65 percent. Over the last 15 years, the SOAR model has been used to connect over 55,210 people who were experiencing or at risk of homelessness to SSI/SSDI benefits.

Read the full issue brief to learn creative strategies SOAR providers have developed to continue to assist clients with their applications during this time of physical distancing. You will also learn how SOAR is being implemented with special populations, including people who are justice involved, children, youth in transition, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and Veterans. The issue brief also examines how communities in Florida, Maryland,



Download the 2020 National
SAMHSA SOAR Outcomes Issue
Brief!

Minnesota, Nevada, and Virginia are implementing the SOAR model locally and producing strong outcomes through innovative partnerships, training initiatives, and collaborations. We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our State Team Leads, Local Leads, SOAR providers, and partners—without your commitment and tenacity, outcomes like these would not be possible.

[Download the Issue Brief](#)



Racial Equity Resources

The American Public Health Association has been holding an [Advancing Racial Equity Webinar Series](#) since June 2020. The first, [Racism: The Ultimate Underlying Condition](#), and fourth, [Housing Is a Human Right](#), webinars are of particular interest to SOAR providers, but we encourage you to review the descriptions of the others, which take “an in-depth look at racism as a driving force of the social determinants of health and equity.”

Reminder: COVID-19 Resources for SOAR Providers

Did you know that the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has assembled a webpage outlining COVID-19 resources for SOAR providers? Across the country, providers have implemented innovative methods to engage applicants and complete SOAR-assisted SSI/SSDI applications during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has highlighted some of these practices under a “Suggestions from the Field” heading on the COVID-19 resources page. The suggestions are organized around three topics:

- Communicating with the applicant
- Obtaining signatures from the applicant
- Communicating/submitting documents to the Social Security Administration (SSA)

In addition to the Suggestions from the Field heading, the webpage provides resources on the following topics:

- SOAR resources (includes a SOAR webinar and new SOAR tools)
- Unemployment insurance and SSI/SSDI
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) during COVID-19
- Federal resources
- State and national partner resources

Bookmark this page and check back frequently for new resources, strategies, and tools! Thank you for your commitment to the individuals we serve and maintaining the SOAR model's fidelity during this unprecedented time.

[Visit the COVID-19 Resources for SOAR Providers Page](#)

[Visit SSA's Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Updates Page](#)

Sharing Our Successes

A Team Effort Helps Applicant SOAR to Success in Kansas

Jonathan Pendergrass from Four County Mental Health Center in Coffeyville, Kansas, wrote in to share this incredible SOAR success story:



“Because of the severity of her mental illnesses, Jane* did not have stable housing. Her family lived several states away, and she did not have much support from the people she knew locally. She had a growing list of interactions with law enforcement, who were unsure how to help her, and she had not had much success with following through on her medical appointments. In addition, SSA had been attempting to contact her for a review. She eventually found herself experiencing homelessness, lost her disability benefits, was sleeping in sheds and other questionable structures, and would be seen walking down the streets at nighttime hours or during inclement weather. She also lost medical coverage and access to the medications she needed.

A referral for SOAR was made, which provided Jane with a team of people who were able to put in the extra effort it was going to take to search and locate her, see that she got her mail/appointment notices, advocate on her behalf, and connect her to the resources she needed. There was a significant lack of history and medical sources for Jane, as she was not able to communicate them. Due to the efforts made by so many, Jane received approval for SSI, which included medical coverage that aided her in her recovery. She was provided with a Representative Payee who could now make sure her rent and utilities would continue to be on time. She now has a growing relationship with her treatment team who she can trust to aid her with appointments and making sure she follows through with disability reviews when they come up. Her case manager is assisting her with obtaining housing, food, and hygiene and is connecting her to additional resources. She can now rely on the benefits she receives to ensure she has the necessities that no one should be without. This is how SOAR changes lives!

It is so important that a SOAR practitioner builds a great working relationship with their local SSA field office, Disability Determination Services, facility medical records departments, and other stakeholders, as this is what makes SOAR most efficient. Using the critical components and having so many invested in the goal of housing, medical coverage, benefits, decreased medical and legal interactions, and ultimately a sustainable life is why SOAR is a necessity in every community.”

What a fantastic success story, Jonathan! Thank you for sharing Jane's success with us.

Ohio Applicant and Her Family SOARs to Success

Karen Stonestreet from Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services in Cincinnati, Ohio, wrote in to share this fantastic success story:



“Kelly was referred by her care manager. She and her five children were experiencing homelessness, and Kelly could not hold a job due to physical and mental conditions. This was my first time using the SOAR model for a person with children and a person who had significant physical limitations.

I worked with Kelly and her family, and she was approved benefits, and so were her children. The income from her disability benefit payments has allowed Kelly to get an apartment with plenty of room for her family. Her children are now able to have their own beds. She is now able to concentrate on her own physical and mental health.”

What a fantastic story, Karen! Congratulations on your SOAR success!

[Submit Your SOAR Success](#)

**Sharing Our Successes stories are edited for brevity and clarity. All client names have been changed to protect anonymity.*

Events

[SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls](#)

December 15, 2020, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

The next SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call will take place on December 15, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. ET! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center hosts this series of informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country. Participants can join to ask about any SOAR-related question they may have.

[Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar](#)

Get Social with the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center

Hear more about what SAMHSA SOAR is up to via [@samhsagov](#) on Twitter, [@samhsa](#) on Facebook, and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) on LinkedIn!

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 134,877 followers 1mo ***

👤 **SOAR PRACTITIONERS:** The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center has developed six information sheets that provide guidance to parents/caregivers, youth providers, educators, and more on how to assist with the child SSI application process. Check them out! <https://fal.cn/3aTQD>

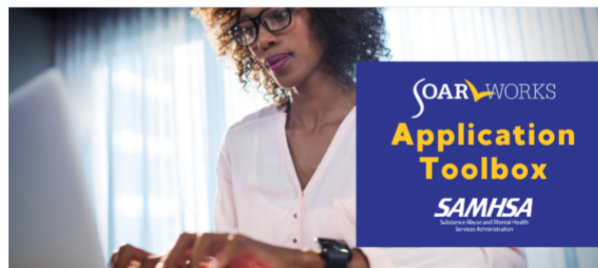


SSI for Children: Information Sheets | SOAR Works!
soarworks.prainc.com

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👤 **SOAR PROVIDERS:** These resources from the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center application toolbox can help you get started on your first SSI/SSDI application and help connect individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness with a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder to income stability! <https://fal.cn/3b2MT>



SOAR Works!
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Federal Updates

[SSA's New Online Option for the Disability Update Report \(Form SSA-455\)](#)

SSA is making it easier for people who receive SSI/SSDI to submit their Disability Update Report (SSA-455) online. This form is periodically completed by some beneficiaries for their Continuing Disability Review. In addition to completing the form online, beneficiaries can still submit form SSA-455 by mail or phone. Read a recent post from the [SSA Matters blog](#) to learn more.

Partner Updates

[HHRC Partner Webinar: Eviction Prevention and Housing Retention During and After COVID-19](#)

December 16, 2020, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET



The COVID-19 pandemic has led to economic hardship and housing instability for millions of Americans. With eviction moratoria expected to expire at the end of 2020, individuals and families are at risk of losing their housing. Join SAMHSA's new Homeless and Housing Resource Center (HHRC) to explore strategies for eviction prevention and housing retention. Participants will hear from U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs leadership, an experienced housing attorney, and local Continuum of Care leadership about implementing data-informed, targeted prevention efforts that prioritize racial equity and learn strategies that can be implemented now to prevent future housing instability when the moratoria expire.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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SAMHSA 5600 Fishers Ln
Rockville, MD | 20857 US

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